IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The following paragraph has been inserted after line 5 on page 2:

The present invention is defined in accompanying claim 1.

Paragraph beginning at line 7 on page 2 has been amended as follows:

~~[In a first aspect, the]~~ The present invention thus provides a webbing assembly in which the webbing is clamped between a pair of substantially parallel clamping surfaces so that the clamping force on the webbing is distributed over a large surface area of the webbing. In a preferred embodiment the clamping surfaces are mutually opposed complementary curved surfaces.

Paragraph beginning at line 12 on page 2 has been deleted.

Paragraph beginning at line 16 on page 2 has been amended as follows:

In a ~~[second aspect, the present invention provides a]~~ preferred arrangement, the webbing assembly ~~[comprising]~~ comprises a webbing clamping mechanism in which the webbing is wrapped around a plurality of pulley-like shafts which are arranged to uniformly distribute a load applied to the webbing when under tension.

Paragraph beginning at line 21 on page 2 has been amended as follows:

~~[In a third aspect, the present invention provides a webbing assembly comprising]~~ Moreover, in the preferred embodiment the webbing assembly comprises a webbing clamping mechanism, in which guide surfaces for the webbing are provided which are arranged to prevent the webbing from coming into contact with itself when the mechanism is in use.

Paragraph beginning at line 25 on page 2 has been amended as follows:

~~[Embodiments of the]~~ The present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Paragraph beginning at line 4 on page 3 has been amended as follows:

Figure 3 is a side view of a webbing tie down assembly forming a first embodiment~~[of the present invention]~~;

Paragraph beginning at line 18 on page 3 has been amended as follows:

Figure 7 is a side view of a webbing tie down assembly forming a second embodiment~~[of the present invention]~~;

Paragraph beginning at line 16 on page 5 has been amended as follows:

Figures 3 to 5 show a webbing tie down assembly according to a first unclaimed embodiment~~[of the present invention]~~. The assembly is generally similar in construction to the prior art assembly shown in Figures 1A and 1B.

Paragraph beginning at line 15 on page 6 has been amended as follows:

~~[In accordance with the present invention, the]~~ The clamping members 119a, 119b provide respective mutually opposing generally planar clamping surfaces 120a, 120b, for clamping a relatively large surface area of the webbing 115, which passes between the two clamping surfaces 120a, 120b. It should be noted that the clamping members 119a, 119b have smooth surfaces and rounded edges to allow the webbing 115 to slide around the surfaces of the clamping members easily, without catching or tearing, as described below.

Paragraph beginning at line 14 on page 7 has been amended as follows:

Figures 6a to c show the various positions of the first embodiment[~~ of the present invention~~], in use.

Paragraph beginning at line 21 on page 8 has been amended as follows:

A second embodiment[~~ of the present invention~~] , also unclaimed, is shown in Figures 7 to 9. The structural features of this embodiment are generally the same as the first embodiment and the following description relates mainly to the different features of the second embodiment.

Paragraph beginning at line 14 on page 10 has been amended as follows:

Figures 10 to 12 show a webbing tie down assembly according to a third and preferred embodiment [of] in accordance with the present invention. Like the first embodiment, the assembly of the third embodiment is similar in construction to the prior art assembly shown in Figures 1A and 1B, but dimensioned on a larger scale and with higher grade materials to achieve the increased load bearing requirements.

Paragraph beginning at line 22 on page 11 has been amended as follows:

[The] In accordance with the present invention, the clamping surface 320 of the upper clamping member 309, which opposes the surface of roller shaft 307, is formed with a curvature complementary to the curvature of the shaft such that when webbing 315 is clamped between the clamping members 307, 309 the clamping surfaces lie substantially parallel, separated by a distance slightly less than the normal thickness of the webbing, thus applying a generally uniform clamping force over a large surface area of the webbing.

Paragraph beginning at line 20 on page 12 has been amended as follows:

Figures 12a to 12c show the various positions of the third embodiment [of] in accordance with the present invention, in use, and will not be described since they correspond to the positions shown in Figures 6a to 6c of the first embodiment described above.

Paragraph beginning at line 24 on page 12 has been amended as follows:

The [described embodiments] preferred embodiment of the present invention [are] is designed for use with relatively thick polyester webbing having a breaking force in excess of 15000lb. The thickness of the webbing is not however critical, and the webbing tie down assembly has been found to work effectively with a variety of webbing thicknesses.